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BLM Accepts Comments for the August 2012 Oil and Gas Lease Sale for SW Colorado

MONTROSE, Colo. –The Bureau of Land Management’s Uncompahgre Field Office will accept comments concerning an environmental assessment on 22 proposed oil and gas parcels for the Aug. 9, 2012, quarterly oil and gas lease sale.

“An environmental assessment for the leases gives the public an opportunity to submit specific comments on potential parcels. The field office staff will review the comments and incorporate the public input into the environmental assessment,” said Barb Sharrow, Uncompahgre Field Office manager.

The Uncompahgre Field Office will evaluate parcels near Paonia, Hotchkiss, Somerset and Crawford. Approximately 30,000 acres are nominated of which about 900 acres are private surface with the remainder located on federal surface lands. Maps of the parcels are posted online at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/ufo.html.

“In order for a company to develop an oil or gas lease, additional site-specific environmental analysis regarding air, water, wildlife, recreation, historic and cultural resources must be undertaken before an Application for Permit to Drill is issued” said Sharrow.

During this environmental review, the public has 30 days to submit information regarding the proposed parcels. Comments must be submitted in writing by Jan. 9, 2012, to the BLM Uncompahgre Field Office, Attn: Oil and Gas Lease Sale, 2465 S. Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401, fax 970-240-5368 or co_ufo_leasing@blm.gov.

As part of leasing reform, BLM field offices with proposed leases are now preparing environmental assessments if needed before each sale to give the public an opportunity to submit comments on potential parcels and allow the BLM to address mitigation. The BLM is mandated to offer lands nominated by the public for oil and gas leasing – provided leasing is an acceptable use of the land as identified the field office’s resource management plan.

The public will have another opportunity to provide comments on these parcels once the environmental assessment is scheduled to be available in February.

A complete overview of the oil and gas leasing process can be found at http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/newsroom/Energy_Facts_07/development.html.

Traditional energy development is important in Colorado and accounted for 22,912 jobs along the Western Slope in fiscal year 2010. The State of Colorado received more than \$178.6 million in fiscal year 2010 from royalties, rentals and bonus bid payments for all federal minerals, including oil, gas and coal.

Please note that comments and information submitted regarding this project, including email addresses and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, e-mail address, or street address from public view or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by the law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

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